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ABSTRACT

In response to the growing Hispanic population in Dade County Florida and the resultant need for the English-speaking businessperson to be conversant in Spanish, Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) developed and produced a non-traditional, conversational approach to Spanish instruction. In Miami, where Hispanics account for almost 60% of the city's population and generate an estimated $2.25 billion worth of annual income, Spanish-language preparedness has become a necessity for American businesspersons wishing to take advantage of the non-English-speaking marketplace. "Survival Spanish," MDCC's conversational Spanish telecourse, consists of 30 video and 34 audio programs, a workbook, an audiotape script booklet, and a question booklet. The materials focus on typical conversational business settings, such as restaurants, retail stores, doctors' offices, travel agencies, and schools. "Survival Spanish" is designed to teach Spanish as the language is used on a daily basis, focusing first on conversation and second on language structure. The course is accessible to remote learners on Miami's Public Broadcasting Service as well as some local cable systems. The video- and audiocassettes are also available for non-credit independent learning by individuals and local businesses. Though research evidence on the effectiveness of "Survival Spanish" is not yet available, anecdotal reports from students and faculty indicate that the program is both captivating and instructive. (EJV)

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THE BEST LANGUAGE TO SEAL THE DEAL MAY NOT BE ENGLISH -- SURVIVAL SPANISH CAN HELP

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THE BEST LANGUAGE TO SEAL THE DEAL MAY NOT BE ENGLISH--
SURVIVAL SPANISH CAN HELP

Knowing one language is no longer sufficient for high performance in business. Business personnel in training departments are often called upon to provide remedial training for executives who are interacting with Spanish customers and who are traveling or stationed in Spanish-speaking countries. The value of Spanish as a second language has become important in Miami and in other cities where a large Hispanic population resides and consequently is served by business and the professions.

The "Latinization" of Dade County, Florida is a unique phenomena in the history of modern American, metropolitan areas. Not since waves of European immigrants reached the United States shores in the late 19th and early 20th centuries have non-English-speaking people had so great an effect on a single large urban area. In little over a decade, the Hispanic settlement changed the urban composition of the Miami metropolitan area which has had an unprecedented effect on the socioeconomic structure of the community.[1] Most of these effects have been positive,

particularly for the business community. But only for that part of the business community who has been prepared or has been open-minded enough to position itself to get prepared. This paper will explore the necessity for Spanish language preparedness by American businesspersons to take advantage of the opportunities of a non-English-speaking marketplace and how Miami-Dade Community College, in particular, is contributing to the resources available for such preparedness.

Up until recently, one of the problems in learning a second language has been the poor quality, inflexible and inconvenient materials available for the busy, aspiring businessperson. However, Miami-Dade Community College, being one of the largest community colleges in the country and projecting the growing need for English-speaking people of Dade County, Florida and the rest of the country to be conversant in another language, developed and produced a non-traditional, conversational approach to learning Spanish. SURVIVAL SPANISH takes the form of a telecourse, yet is intended for use in a variety of ways which will be discussed in this paper.

In Miami, Hispanics account for almost 3/5's of the city's 350,000 population and 35.7 percent of the county's 1.7

million.[2] (The census data does not take into account the 100,000 or so Mariel refugees who hit the South Florida shores in mid-1980.) (See figure 1) To a large extent, Hispanics have transformed Miami and the rest of Dade County into a dynamic commercial center. Latinos generate an estimated 2.25 billion dollars[3] (that's not million, but billion dollars) worth of annual income and have created nearly 300,000 jobs.[4] (See figure 2)

Yes, America's Hispanic population is rising rapidly. The 1980 census put the United States Hispanic population at just under 15 million people[5]--or about 6.4 percent of the total population. (Some argue that the figure would be closer to 22 million if illegal aliens were also counted.[6]) And, by 1990, Hispanics could easily surpass Blacks as the nation's single largest minority.[7] The Hispanic population, according to the United States Census Bureau data, still remains concentrated in four states, California, Texas, New York and Florida, where at least 70 percent of the Hispanics in the United States live. On the other hand, 15 states now have Hispanic populations of at least 100,000 people[8], and 23 United States cities have Hispanic populations of 50,000 people or more.[9] (See figure 3)

In addition to the rising foreign population in the United States, there has also been a rise of foreign

commerce by United States companies. In the early 1960's, foreign trade was not an important segment of the economy. The United States was largely a self-sufficient entity. Yet by 1970, imports and exports were practically equal at 9.3 percent. By 1980, exports had more than doubled to a full 22 percent. The volume of goods flowing into this country is continuing to increase faster than the volume of shipments abroad, creating a growing deficit in the United States balance of payments.[10]

It is clear--Hispanics make up an ever-increasing number of our total population and the need to understand their culture and their language is becoming even more important to the non-Hispanic businessperson. As well, the world has become a single marketplace and the needs to communicate or at least to understand a portion of the language and the culture of the non-English-speaking person in this marketplace is evident.

It seems as if the smaller countries have a better understanding of this global marketplace concept. Today, the small industrialized countries have a lead when it comes to exporting their high tech products, simply because circumstances forced them abroad at a very early stage in their development. Take Holland for instance, production and marketing are not based on Dutch or even European

markets, but rather on the world market since a Dutch entrepreneur knows that his country is too small to support every type of advanced business and that he must get out into the world market.[11] This indicates that with the United States deficit in the balance of payments growing and as changes in exports and imports result, United States companies must look outside their borders for larger markets. And of course, the need to communicate with these other markets becomes even more essential and important.

But where do all these findings lead? The rise in foreign commerce has been financially beneficial to some companies only at the expense of showing the world how ill-prepared some have been to deal with the necessary communications.

There has been some American attempts in marketing products to non-English-speaking markets which have resulted in some classic examples of America's inability not only to communicate but to recognize a new market on its own merits instead of Americanizing it. For example, the case of General Motors' marketing the Chevy Nova in the Carribean. Sales were slow until it was discovered that Nova in Spanish means "does not go." After changing the name to "Caribe", sales improved.[12] American ideas and concepts cannot be transferred directly to another language or society. The

lack of foreign language training in the United States tends to reduce our knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

This lack of foreign language training is also evident in the governmental and educational sectors. Illinois Representative Paul Simon's investigations of foreign language study in the United States revealed discrepancies even within the State Department. Representative Simon discovered that the State Department does not require knowledge of a foreign language for its incoming foreign service officers. Unfortunately, he discovered this in an embarrassing situation as a result of poor foreign language training. When Representative Simon and other statesmen traveled to Eygpt for a meeting with Anwar Sadat, they found themselves late for a meeting because the Embassy representatives were unable to communicate with the Egyptian taxi driver.[13] This incident was the impetus for Representative Simon to propose legislation to set up a Presidential Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies. One thing the Commission revealed was that a foreign language requirement for admission was in place at only eight percent of American colleges and universities, down from 34 percent in 1966 and 85 percent in 1915. And that only 15 percent of American high school

students study a foreign language--and then generally only up to a minimal level.[14] As Congressman Simon put it, among 76 nations surveyed, "None can compare with the United States in neglect of foreign languages."[15]

This data is also subsumed by the contents of a Report on International Education and Economic Development in Florida, which provides a challenge for the 21st century the State of Florida. In this report, the Governor of Florida says,

> "We need to make, as a community, a major effort to expand our linguistic capabilities...Every primary English speaker should have a goal: To seek a level of proficiency, if not fluency, in Spanish. The State would be ill-served if foreign language instruction was provided exclusively in traditional and conventional fashions. It is imperative that new educational delivery systems aimed at achieving conversational fluency and cultural understanding be implemented if Floridians are to master bilingual skills."[16]

Clearly, the main objective of the Project for International Education and Economic Development was to explore and develop creative means by which "the international education and international business

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communities could work together to maximize mutual and individual interests to further the international economic development of the State of Florida. The premises underlining the public/private sector partnership suggests an exchange of resources, knowledge, and expertise between those communities, leading to more effective and efficient institutional and industrial growth."[17]

Fortunately, Miami-Dade Community College and its President Robert H. McCabe had been working on and developing just such non-traditional, conversational Spanish materials since 1978. The materials were designed for use by the College's own students, but have a large potential for use within the business community not only in Dade County but in other places where there is a large number of Hispanic persons.

A telecourse is characterized as video and/or audio working together with integrated print materials for use with remote or distant learners. SURVIVAL SPANISH is designed as a telecourse but has application as supplement to classroom instruction. SURVIVAL SPANISH consists of 30 video and 34 audio programs, a workbook, an audiotape script

booklet, and a question booklet. The materials, designed to individualize Spanish for speakers of English, assist in providing introductory Spanish proficiency in typical conversational business settings as restaurants, retail stores, doctor's offices, travel agencies and schools.

SURVIVAL SPANISH is designed to teach Spanish as the language is used on a daily basis. It is not proposed to be a traditional structured Spanish program, but rather its emphasis is on speaking and using. Substitutional dialogue with a conversation coming first and the structure second is the basic, underlying philosophy. Feelings are it is irrelevant to know sentence structure before learning to speak. SURVIVAL SPANISH is not for the ultimate Spanish speaker or professional, but is for the person who is trying to gain a working knowledge of Spanish to use in everyday conversations.

The video programs are, of course, the component that most obviously distinguishes a telecourse, and in particular SURVIVAL SPANISH, from other forms of Spanish language instruction. The television component of SURVIVAL SPANISH emphasizes the conversational skills and structure necessary for successful oral communications. These programs are aimed at providing all students--especially those who study

at home or in a supervised, independent study mode--with their own personal instructor who both introduces new material and guides them through the necessary practice and drill. Each video taped lesson is carefully paced, structured so that students can assimilate the material covered while concurrently developing the associated vocabulary, pronunciation and structural skills required.

The format of the video introduces a dramatically presented conversation from one of the topic areas of restaurants, retial stores, doctor's offices, travel agencies or schools, reviews that conversation in English and then in Spanish for proper pronunciation, provides an opportunity for the student to repeat the conversation in Spanish, and builds additional vocabulary and grammatical usage.

Miami-Dade Community College made a conscious decision to produce this particular format. Even though the College had been producing instructional television for over 15 years, receiving numerous awards and distinctions for its use of on-site filming, creative editing and studio enhancement, it was felt that masterful television was not needed for SURVIVAL SPANISH. In the past, it was believed one of the reasons for exploiting the multisensory properties

of the television medium was to motivate a student who otherwise might not have been attracted to that particular topic. But research has shown that the successful telecourse student is a mature adult, credential minded, career oriented and highly motivated[18]--translated to mean a student looking for a convenient, efficient and effective way to add upon his or her knowledge and not looking for a lot of frills.

Since most people who enroll in a language course are already motivated to learn the language, it was felt a traditional instructional television format with a few creative vignettes would reach out to the most people. The first 26 programs of SURVIVAL SPANISH were initially completed in fall, 1983. There were discussions at that time that the series could be strengthened by adding four more programs, making a total of 30 programs.
The 30-program series provides conversational language instruction for the present and past tenses including the indicative mood. Completing the curriculum package is a text/workbook for students to practice while following along with the video. Audiotapes and audiotape scripts are available for additional practice and drill.

There are a number of possibilities for using SURVIVAL SPANISH at Miami-Dade Community College. It is designed as a telecourse to enroll remote or distant learners. Thus, it

is aired on Miami's Public Broadcasting Service and on some of the cable systems in the area. The series is also being aired nationwide over The Learning Channel, a cable satellite delivery service, and fed into cable systems that affiliate with The Learning Channel.

Other uses at Miami-Dade include a non-credit, independent mode where people can learn at their own pace and in their own homes with the use of their own videotape and audiotape recorders. Training departments at several local businesses are preparing to use these materials with in-house, credit and non-credit training programs.

There has been some talk about enrolling continuing education students in a Miami-Dade sponsored Foreign Language Institute for use of SURVIVAL SPANISH to learn a language. Miami-Dade would anticipate many professional people being attracted to the Institute.

Miami-Dade Community College has only recently begun the national marketing of SURVIVAL SPANISH. Even though significant use outside Dade County has not been seen, over 800 requests to review the video and audio were received within two weeks of the initial mailing.

As the demographics of the college student population change as more and more cities grant franchises and wire-up for cable television delivery and as the range of

educational services available from satellites expand, post-secondary institutions face great challenges in delivering non-traditional education in non-traditional ways.

Since SURVIVAL SPANISH is yet so new, research evidence on its teaching effectiveness is not presently available. Nonetheless, anecdotal reports from students and faculty seem to indicate that the television is both captivating and instructive. It is expected that the results of research on SURVIVAL SPANISH as a teaching resource will be similar to that of other telecourse materials. In reviewing the studies on instructional television, it is reported that television and classroom instruction that are similar in content are equally effective.[19] "No significant difference in learning" seems to be the accepted attitude. Dade County, Florida may well be ahead of other places in the country encouraging the learning of a second language via instructional television and audio. However, other states are not far behind. Texas has just passed legislation to require all high school graduates of public schools to take two years of a foreign language. Other states will be following suit. This says to the educational community that they must provide good-quality foreign language instruction for large numbers of students effectively and efficiently. This also says to those in the

business community that to keep ahead they must acquire foreign langauge proficiency and they must acquire it fast.

Miami-Dade Community College is pleased to be able to share its instructional resources to help the educational and business communities in this foreign language crisis. For more information regarding SURVIVAL SPANISH or for an opportunity to preview the learning materials, contact Miami-Dade Community College, Auxiliary Services, 11011 S.W. 104 Street, Miami, FL, 33176, (305) 596-1364.

Notes

[1] Dade County, Office of the County Manager, Profile of the Latin Population in Metropolitan Dade County Area (Miami: Metropolitan Dade County, 1976) p.iii.

[2] Hialeah Dade Development, Inc., The Business and Industrial Report (n.p.: n.p., 1982), pp. 4.5.

[3] "New Dawn for America's Latins, "Reader's Digest, Feb. 1979, p. 185.

[4] Telephone interview with Richard Welch, Director of Dade County Research, Division of Planning, 14 March, 1984.

[5] The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1984 (New York; Newspaper Enterprise Association, Inc. 1983), p. 200.

[6] "Largest Spanish Populations in the World," Hispanic Age, Nov. 1982, p. 1.

[7] Florida, Department of Education, International Education and Economic Development in Florida: Challenge for the 21st Century (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, 1984), p. 38.

[8] The World Almanac 1984, p. 200

[9] The World Almanac 1984, p. 203.

[10] Bengt Anderson, "Developing New Markets With Global Strategies," Marketing Communications, Feb. 1984, p. 16.

[11] Anderson, p. 15.

[12] Nick Thimmesch, "Our Shocking Illiteracy In Foreign Languages," Reader's Digest, Feb. 1981, p. 175.

[13] Thimmesch, p. 176.

[14] Sheldon Sharen, "The Need to Communicate", Travel/Holiday, p. 35.

[15] Paul Simon, The Tongue-Tied American (New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1980) p. 2.

[16] Florida Department of Education, p.

[17] Florida, Department of Education, Executive Summary, International Education and Economic Development in Florida: Challenge for the 21st Century (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, 1984), p. 11.

[18] James J. Zigerell, "What Is A Telecourse?" in Reaching New Students Through New Technologies, ed. Leslie Noble Purdy (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1983), p. 20.

[19] Dean Jamison, Patrick Suppes and Stuart Wells, "The Effectiveness of Alternative Instructional Media: A Survey, "Review of Educational Research, 44 (1974), 36.

CITY OF MIAMI

IF TAKE INTO ACCOUNT 100,000 MARIEL REFUGEES:

BASED UPON 1980 CENSUS DATA

Figure 1

HISPANICS IN DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

DADE COUNTY POPULATION	1,627,434
HISPANIC POPULATION (35.7%)	580,994
25 YEARS OR OLDER (63.8%)	370,997
JOBS	279,182
AVERAGE EARNINGS	$18,983
TOTAL HISPANIC INCOME	$2,240,000,000
HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION	53%
MEDIAN YEARS OF EDUCATION	12.1

DATA ACQUIRED FROM DADE COUNTY RESEARCH, DIV. OF PLANNING DEPT.

Figure 2

NATIONAL HISPANIC POPULATION

15 MILLION PEOPLE— 6.4%

Figure 3

Biographical Statement: Cynthia Ann Elliott

She is presently Manager of Product Development & Distribution for Miami-Dade Community College, responsible for marketing and distributing educational video, audio and computer software produced by the College to other educational institutions or other users of instructional technology. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, in 1977 receiving the Outstanding Public Relations Student Award and honored as member of Phi Kappa Phi and Pi Delta Epsilon. Upon graduation she was employed as Director of Advertising and Public Relations for the Miami International Merchandise Mart. She is a member of the Public Relations Society of America, the Florida Association of Community Colleges, the Telecourse People Consortium and the Instructional Telcommunications Consortium.

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